

San Diego, CA
(San Diego Co.)
San Diego
Union Tribune
(Cir. D. 392,388)
(Cir. S. 467,287)

MAY 12 1993

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Input sought on restoration of river delta

26-20
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ENCINITAS — Citizens can comment at a public meeting tonight on plans to repair ecological damage to the estuary east of San Francisco Bay so Northern California water can keep flowing to Southern California.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. at the Encinitas City Council Chambers, 505 S. Vulcan Ave. An hour-long informal question-and-answer session will be followed by a formal public hearing beginning at 7 p.m.

Alternate plans to restore the ecology of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta are at issue. Water for 22 million Californians flows through the Northern California estuary. A significant portion of the water used in San Diego County comes through the Delta, but the amount varies.

A variety of problems, including invasions of non-native aquatic species and the pumping of water through the Delta during the 1987-92 drought, sent several of the estuary's species, including some species of salmon, into population tailspins.

CalFed, a joint task force of state and federal agencies, worked for nearly three years on developing a plan to restore the area's ecological health while also making deliveries of water through the Delta more reliable. The agency released its draft \$10 billion-plus plan in March, and 17 hearings across the state will gather public comment on the plan's environmental implications.

Roughly 200 San Diego County residents are expected to attend tonight's meeting and hearing, which will be the only one in San Diego County.